

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY  
Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

USASMA Circular  
No. 350-02-1

**TRAINING**  
NONRESIDENT PROGRAM  
POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND GRADING STANDARDS

1. **PURPOSE.** To publish the policies and procedures of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) Nonresident Sergeants Major Course (SMNRC).
2. **APPLICABILITY.** This circular applies to all NRSMC students enrolled at USASMA.
3. **REFERENCES.**
  - a. AR 350-41, Training in Units
  - b. AR 351-1, Individual Military Education and Training
  - c. AR 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program
  - d. USASMA Memo 623-1, The Student Physical Training and Appearance Program
4. **CLASS FACILITATOR (CF).** The CF is the student's point of contact for this course and the USASMA. The NRC web site lists the telephone numbers and E-mail addresses used to contact the CFs.
5. **FACULTY GRADED LESSONS.** Students must attain 70 percent to receive a "GO" for any lesson. Students achieving less than 70 percent will redo the lesson until they attain a passing score. Students may not take the end-of-module exam until all faculty Graded lessons are completed. Exceptions: Students may redo lessons C501 (Army Writing Style), C500-C (Information Brief and Graduation Speech), L500 (Military Book Report) **ONLY TWICE.**
6. **PHASE COMPLETION.** The NRSMC consists of 2 phases. Phase I has six modules and is done by correspondence (see completion schedule below). Phase II is the resident phase conducted at the USASMA. USASMA conducts the resident phase in June of each year. Phase I, modules 1-6 have **mandatory** completion dates identified in the student's welcome packet. The mandatory completion dates are the maximum times allowed for completion of each module. Students who fail to meet the mandatory completion dates are subject to a Lack of Progress dismissal. Students may accelerate their studies and graduate in one year. In order to do so, students must significantly increase their pace of study and testing.

## 7. TESTING PROCEDURES.

a. Students must successfully complete each end of module examination, in order, during the nonresident phase of the course. A Test Control Officer (TCO), at either a local military education center or an officer (warrant or commissioned) appointed on orders locally, will administer each end-of-module examination. Enlisted personnel are not authorized to administer SMNRC examinations. This includes civilian personnel who hold National Guard or Reserve enlisted positions. These examinations test the student's knowledge of the material presented in modules 1 through 6.

b. USASMA will preposition an examination Compact Disk(CD) to the TCO containing all module exams and testing instructions. Each CD contains detailed instructions and procedures on how to complete the examinations. These examinations are multiple choice. Students may not use references or course material when taking the examination. The student must contact their TCO to ensure that they have received the examination CD. The student will contact his/her CF to get authorization to test when they have completed all Lesson exercises. After authorization has been sent, by the CF to the TCO, the student will contact the TCO to coordinate a test date. Students must take the examination within 15 days of receipt by the TCO. USASMA grades the examination once the TCO returns it. It is in the best interest of the student to call his CF after taking the exam to find out his/her results. Students should wait at least 2 weeks to allow for the postal service.

c. Students will retest if they receive less than 70 percent on any module examination. Before taking the retest, the CF will send the student a study aid. Students use the study aid to assist in preparing for the retest. The study aid is designed to help students focus on the specific areas of material from which questions are drawn (TLOs/ELOs). In order to pass the retest, students must do a comprehensive review of **all** module material. USASMA will issue(email or CD) the TCO the retest. Students are subject to dismissal from the NRSNC if they fail the retest.

d. Students must notify the TCO and CF as soon as a scheduling conflict (TDY, PCS, etc.) arises. If the student cannot reach the TCO, they will personally contact their CF.

e. **The SMCNRC will not authorize a TCO to administer module examinations out of order.** If an examination is received in the NRC and all prior module examinations or lessons have not been completed, the examination will be considered invalid and a retest issued.

8. **ACCELERATED GRADUATION PROGRESS.** SMNRC students have the opportunity to graduate early by accelerating their studies. This allows students to exercise initiative and aids them in achieving professional goals. Students desiring to attend the resident phase prior to the two year schedule must complete all six nonresident modules prior to 28 February of the first year. Advance commitment is

not a requirement. The availability of classroom space and the student's module 6 exam completion date determine sequencing for selection to attend the resident phase.

9. **PHYSICAL TRAINING AND APPEARANCE POLICY (PTAP).** The objective of the SMNRC PTAP is to ensure each student meets current Army standards and has a thorough understanding of AR 350-41 and AR 600-9 prior to graduation from the Sergeants Major Course (SMC). Module examinations will not be authorized until the SMCNRC receives this information.

a. As part of enrollment, each SMNRC student must meet the height and weight standards of AR 600-9. Each student accomplishes this by using the certification form in their information packet. A commissioned officer (company level or above) within the chain of command must verify this information.

b. During the two-week resident phase, USASMA will confirm your height and weight. USASMA will also administer the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). **You must pass the APFT during the resident phase at the USASMA to graduate.** Failure to pass the APFT, meet height/weight requirements or body fat standards will result in dismissal and the Academic Evaluation Report (AER) (DA Form 1059) will reflect a rating of "Failed to Achieve Course Standards" in the performance summary block. Students who fail the initial APFT and get a profile, that does not allow them to retest within 14 days, will be medically disenrolled from the SMCNRC

10. **DISMISSAL POLICY.** IAW AR 351-1, para 5-23 (1), all requests for dismissal, for any reason, must have endorsements from the student's chain of command and proponent. Active Component students must submit their requests through NCOES Branch, PERSCOM; Army Reserve students through AR-PERSCOM, ATTN: ARPC-PLT-S, 1 Reserve Way, St Louis, MO 63132-5200; National Guard students through NCOES Branch, NGB-ARO-TI. USASMA will return, without action, any request received without proper endorsements. **(A change in status from TPU to the IRR or USAR Ctrl Gp (Reinforced) does not constitute grounds for dismissal from the SMNRC. Failure of the student to continue satisfactory progress after a change in status will result in a lack of progress dismissal.)**

The Academy may dismiss students for any of the following reasons:

a. Lack of progress. Students that fall behind the scheduled module completion dates are subject to the following actions:

- (1) 30 days behind schedule, **Memorandum of Concern to CSM.**
- (2) 60 days behind schedule, **placed on academic probation and letter goes to CSM and student.**
- (3) 90 days behind schedule, **lack of progress disenrollment.**

- b. A student is subject to dismissal for lack of progress due to failure to meet the following deadlines:

**START DATE 1 APRIL 02**

- (1) Module 1 within 4 months of the start date (31 Jul 02).
- (2) Module 2 within 8 months of the start date (30 Nov 02).
- (3) Module 3 within 12 months of the start date (31 Mar 03).
- (4) Module 4 within 16 months of the start date (31 Jul 03).
- (5) Module 5 within 20 months of the start date (30 Nov 03).
- (6) Module 6 by 28 Feb of the scheduled graduation year.

c. Academic failure. A student is subject to dismissal for failure of both the primary and retest examinations for any module.

d. Approved retirement. USASMA will only voluntarily dismiss students upon receipt of retirement orders with an effective date prior to any Lack of Progress dismissal.

e. Plagiarism. A student is subject to dismissal for appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, or thoughts of another person without giving credit to the original author. **You may not use another student's work as a reference.** Students should use source documents (published books and articles) for research. Information used in a student's written or oral response must be in their own words. The student may not copy directly from supplemental readings or other source documents. Additionally, the student must identify the source document. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Any time a CF, FA or student suspects plagiarism on the part of any student; it will be reported to the NRSMC chief instructor (CI), who will advise the company commander. The company commander will advise the battalion commander. The CI will conduct an investigation and determine if the alleged plagiarism is factual. Verified cases of plagiarism will result in dismissal from the course.

f. In accordance with AR 351-1, para 5-30,c.(3)(d), any student dismissed from the course may appeal their dismissal in writing through the Commandant, USASMA, to Commander, USAADAC and Ft. Bliss, TX for review of their case based on exceptional and substantial reasons. Final dismissal appeal authority for NRSMC students is the general court martial convening authority (Commander, USAADAC), Ft. Bliss, TX.

11. **EXTENSIONS/DEFERMENTS.**

- a. **Extensions**-If students cannot meet the required completion date per the module completion schedule, they may request an extension from their CF for that module only. USASMA may grant extensions for exceptional cases. Students must show that circumstances beyond their control prevented them from achieving minimum academic progress. These circumstances must be of a temporary nature and cannot impede future progress.
- b. **DEFERMENTS**- Students, who for some reason beyond their control cannot attend the resident phase of their scheduled graduation year, may submit a request for deferment through their chain of command, to the commandant of USASMA. This must be submitted and approved prior to the start of the resident phase. **Any deferment sent directly to the USASMA and not through the chain of command, will be returned without action.**

12. **SMNRC EVALUATION SYSTEM.**

a. The NRSMC student evaluation system is a process of assessing each student using the "whole person" concept, culminating with the submission of an AER. It is both an objective and subjective process arrived at by performance evaluations, examinations, observations, comparison and analysis. It involves input from the CF and the faculty advisors (FA) during the resident phase. CFs are responsible for compiling and reporting the total assessment on the AER.

b. The SMNRC grading is based on a "GO/NO GO" concept. A "GO" rating means the student demonstrated competency in the evaluated skill and met the established standards. All ratings will be justified on the AER.

c. **CF/FA Duties and Responsibilities.**

(1) CF. CFs assist students in meeting course requirements. Helping the student is their primary mission. The CFs counsel and advise the student in all evaluated areas including written communication, oral communication, research ability, physical fitness and weight control standards. The CF counsels students on any "NO GO" performance during Modules 1 through 6 to identify the student's problem areas. The CFs monitor progress on the self-paced requirements in Modules 1 through 6 and submit a Nonresident Student Summary Sheet (NRSSS), FB Form 0379e, on each of their students IAW this circular.

(2) FA. The FAs counsel and assist students on their contribution to group work and the academic curriculum during the resident phase. FAs report student absences through their senior instructors (SI) using the Absentee Report, FB 0379f. The FA counsels students on any "NO GO" performance during the resident phase to identify the student's problem areas. The FA is responsible for any additional training the student may require while a member of that group in the resident phase. Additionally, they counsel and assist students who fail to maintain a minimum score of 70% on examinations and submit a Resident Academic Input Form, FB Form 0379e-1, for each student at the end of the resident phase.

(3) Other staff and faculty (S&F) members will submit to the CF appropriate documentation (Student Evaluation and Counseling Record (SECR) FB Form 0379, General Counseling Form, Memorandum for Record, etc.) whenever they observe a student's other than satisfactory behavior and/or performance (unsatisfactory/superior). Any S&F member may submit a special SECR for any student activity whenever the S&F member causes involvement by a student in an additional time consuming official activity; and to evaluate a student's leadership skills whenever the S&F member serves as an advisor to student class officer/committee chairperson.

d. Forms.

(1) The SMNRC forms handbook maintained by each CF contains sample forms and detailed instructions for completing them. The CI updates these forms and instructions at the beginning of each class.

(2) To ensure consistency of ratings among FAs and instructors, paragraphs f. and g. below contain criteria to assist them in determining ratings used on all student evaluations.

e. Resident Academic Input Form (RAIF) (FB Form 0379e-1).

(1) The CF and FA use the RAIF to document the overall evaluation of a student's performance during the resident phase. In certain cases a student may receive a special RAIF covering performance or events not normally conducted or expected of the student. The guidelines below assist CF/FAs when preparing the evaluations.

(2) Written Communication.

(a) The CF evaluates the student's written communication ability based on the student's performance in the Army Writing Program on the lesson evaluation (LE).

(b) The CF gives a superior rating to a student who receives a first time "GO" with a score of 90% or higher on two of the three LEs and receives a satisfactory score on the remaining LE. A superior rating cannot be given if the student received an UNSAT in any area.

(c) The CF gives a satisfactory rating to a student who scores at least 70% on each of the three graded LEs. Scoring less than 70% on any requirement requires a rewrite.

(d) The CF gives an unsatisfactory rating to a student who requires more than one rewrite (i.e., scores less than 70% on both the initial LE and the rewrite/retest) on two or more of the three graded LEs.

(3) Oral Communication (Section II, SECR).

(a) The CF/FA evaluates the student's overall speaking ability during Phase I and II. Speaking ability includes any oral communication other than the formally graded presentations completed by the FA (see para 5 below).

(b) The FA gives a superior rating to a student who demonstrates superb communication ability during daily group interactions.

(c) The CF/FA gives an unsatisfactory rating to any student who demonstrates unsatisfactory oral communication skills and/or uses profanity in daily interactions.

(d) The FA evaluates the National Security Affairs Certification Briefing and the Information Brief. These evaluations are separate from the daily oral communications evaluation for the SECR. Your CSM/SGM will use FB Form 1983 (Oral Presentation Evaluation) for the Military History book report and Graduation Speech. Students must send original evaluation sheet to the NRC. FAs use the national security affairs worksheet for the NSA briefing. CF/FAs will make sure students are knowledgeable of the standards for all briefings during the base lessons for the briefings. The lesson materials contain the standards for each briefing.

(4) Leadership Skills. Students' leadership skills will only be evaluated in cases where their actions or conduct warrant an unsatisfactory rating. The CF/FA will evaluate this area when students fail to meet the standards in one or more of the following areas:

(a) The CF/FA relieves a student from a leadership position.

(b) The student consistently demonstrates the inability to follow instructions.

(c) The student fails to attend or participate in group or academy functions.

(d) Unacceptable personal and professional conduct by a student, i.e., DUI/DWI, fails the APFT, fails to meet body fat standards, misconduct, etc.

(e) Plagiarizes someone else's work.

(5) Contribution to Group Work. (Section IV, SECR). Group work includes the group process of establishing norms, setting goals, group cohesiveness, and open communication.

(a) The FA evaluates this area during the resident phase. He gives a superior rating to a student who makes significant contributions on a regular basis, by thorough preparation for class, by exceptional participation in group discussions, and maintenance of appropriate group functional behavior.

(b) The FA gives a satisfactory rating to a student who reads his assignments, prepares for class, participates, and makes meaningful contributions to the group.

(c) The FA gives an unsatisfactory rating to a student who does not read his assignments, fails to prepare for class, does not participate, or does not make any meaningful contributions to the group. An unsatisfactory rating will also be given to any student displaying inappropriate behavior on a continuous basis.

(6) Research Ability.

(a) The CF/FA will evaluate the student's research ability based on research material they provide in Phase I and II. The evaluated research lessons are N512, L500, N500. L512 is US International Strategy and Foreign Policy research paper. This lesson will be completed prior to arriving at the resident phase and turned into the FA. L500 is the Military History Book report (Phase I) and N500 is the NSA Certification Briefing (Phase II). NSA briefing requirements are in lesson N513. The CF gives a superior rating to a student who receives superior ratings on two out of three research requirements.

(b) Students receive a satisfactory rating if they achieve a satisfactory for their research on two out of three requirements. Students that receive an unsatisfactory twice on any one lesson, will not be able to redo that lesson again. Their rating for that lesson will be an UNSAT. Students must also receive at least a SAT on the NSA Brief.

(c) The CF gives an overall unsatisfactory rating to a student who receives an unsatisfactory rating on all research requirements.

f. Overall Student Evaluation Summary Sheet Rating Guidelines (FB Form 0379-2).

(1) The overall student evaluation summary sheet provides the basis for preparing the AER. The CF uses this form in consolidating all RAIFs, NRSSS, oral presentation evaluations, written and performance examinations, physical fitness performance, self-paced requirements, and height/weight information. The NRC administrative section provides APFT scores and height/weight statistics to the CF.



(2) The CF must update the cumulative summary sheet as he receives data from other instructors/staff.

(3) The CF determines the final course ratings that appear in block 14 of the AER as follows:

(a) Written Communication. To receive a final rating of superior, the student's record reflects a superior rating in the Army writing program (see SECR grading guidelines). To receive a final rating of unsatisfactory, the student's record reflects an unsatisfactory rating in the Army writing style.

(b) Oral Communication. To receive a superior rating, the student's record reflects a superior rating in the resident phase rating period and a superior rating on three of four formal graded oral presentations (the remainder of ratings must be satisfactory and a first time go). To receive a final rating of unsatisfactory, the student's record reflects three or more unsatisfactory ratings in all of the oral communications evaluations (daily communication and formally graded presentations). A superior rating cannot be given if the student received an UNSAT in any area.

(c) Leadership Skills (only rated in cases of misconduct). To receive a final rating of unsatisfactory, the student's record reflects dismissal from the course for being overweight, failing the record APFT for graduation requirement, misconduct or apathy.

(d) Contribution to Group Work. To receive a final rating of superior, the student's record reflects a superior rating during the resident phase. To receive a final rating of unsatisfactory, the student's record reflects an unsatisfactory rating during the resident phase.

(e) Research Ability. To receive a final rating of superior, the student's record reflects superior ratings for two of the three evaluated areas (i.e., N500 NSA Briefing, N512 US International Strategy and Foreign Policy and L500 Military History Book Report), and at least a satisfactory rating in the remaining area. To receive a final rating of satisfactory, the student's record reflects ratings of satisfactory for two of the three evaluated areas. To receive a final rating of unsatisfactory, the student's record reflects an unsatisfactory rating for two or more of the three evaluated research areas. A superior rating cannot be given if the student received an UNSAT in any area.

(f) Input from any special SECR received by the student requires incorporation into the applicable area and will help determine the overall rating for that area.

g. Service School Academic Evaluation Report Rating Guidelines (DA Form 1059).

(1) The SMNRC Chief will provide a timetable for completion of the AER for each class.

(2) The CF will support block 13 (performance summary) with the final ratings from the cumulative summary sheet which will also appear in block 14 (demonstrated abilities).

(3) Exceeded Course Standards. **This is limited to 20% of the class.** The CF may give this evaluation to a student who consistently demonstrated superior competence. The student must receive a superior rating in all of the four rated areas from block 14, receive a "GO" the first time on all assignments and examinations, pass the APFT, and consistently display superior military appearance and bearing. **This excludes students placed on the overweight program.**

(4) Achieved Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to a student who completed the course in a satisfactory manner and does not meet the criteria in USASMA Memo 623-1, paras 2-7c, 2-7e, or 2-7f.

(5) Marginally Achieved Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to those students who achieve only minimum acceptable course standards. Substandard performance may include, but is not limited to, the failure of two or more examinations, marginal writing ability evidenced by performance in the Army writing style, poor oral communication skills, APFT failure, enrollment into the overweight program, counseling required on individual qualities/traits expected of a senior noncommissioned officer, or an unsatisfactory rating in any graded area in block 14 of the AER.

(6) Failed to Achieve Course Standards. The CF gives this evaluation to those students who fail to meet the minimum course standards as prescribed in USASMA Memorandum 350-3. These include, but are not limited to, academic performance, physical fitness, and conduct/discipline.

(7) The SMNRC Chief provides each CF with a copy of the approved comments for utilization in block 16 (comments portion) of the AER.

(8) All students require a completed AER, regardless of whether or not they completed the course.

#### h. Routing of Evaluations.

(1) FAs return all completed evaluation forms through the SI to the CF at a predetermined time during the resident phase.

(2) CFs retains all completed evaluation forms in the student's file. Upon completion of the final AER, the CF forwards the documents to the NRSNC Chief NLT four working days prior to graduation.

#### i. Review of Evaluations.

(1) The SMNRC Chief reviews completed worksheets to ensure CF/FA compliance with rating guidance.

(2) The NRSMC Chief reviews, as a minimum, all final AERs with an overall rating of other than "Achieved Course Standards."

j. Referred Reports. The SMNRC Chief processes a referred report in accordance with AR 623-1, Academic Evaluation Reporting System. The A Company Commander will use a memorandum (See Annex A, Sample Memorandum For Referred AERs), and refer the AER to the student when it contains:

(1) Any report with the following ratings:

(a) An unsatisfactory rating.

(b) A "Marginally Achieved Course Standards" response.

(c) A "Failed to Achieve Course Standards" response.

(d) A "NO" response in block 15.

(e) "Fail" for the APFT.

(f) "NO" for height and weight, indicating noncompliance with AR 600-9.

(2) The student will receive a referred report when, in the opinion of the reviewing officer, the report contains comments so derogatory that it will have an adverse impact on the student's career.

k. Student Release. Students released from the academy at any time during the course will receive a rating on DA Form 1059 as follows:

(1) Block 13 (performance summary).

(a) No requirement exists for marking blocks for students administratively dismissed from the course.

b) Students dismissed from the course will receive "Failed to achieve course standards." See USASMA Memo 623-1, para 2-7f.

(2) Block 14 (demonstrated abilities). Evaluation possible, dependent upon time frame student released, i.e., first month vs eighteenth month.

(3) Block 15 (academic potential). Has the student demonstrated the academic potential for selection to higher level schooling/training? This block is self-explanatory. This portion of the evaluation strictly addresses the student's academic potential for other schooling/training. A rating of "NO" constitutes a referred

report and comments must be specific and fully explained in block 16. See USASMA Memo 623-1, para 2-10. Use "N/A" only if the evaluation is not possible which is dependent upon the time frame the student is released.

(4) Block 16 (comments).

(a) A statement explaining the reason for student's release.

(b) A statement that item 14 does not apply to the report (except in cases of academic failure, where comments must support the unsatisfactory ratings in item 14).

13. **COURSE RECOGNITION.** Recognition for graduating the SMNRC is as follows:

a. USASMA awards the student a diploma.

b. AR 640-2-1 and NGR 640-2-1 require annotation on the student's DA Form 2A and DA Form 2-1 (Personnel Qualification Record) to show completion of USASMA.

c. National Guard and Army Reserve NCOs, not on extended active duty, will receive credit hours at the rate of one point for each three credit hours of nonresident course instruction satisfactorily completed (NGR 640-1/AR 140-185).

d. Graduates of the SMNRC will receive equal consideration with resident course graduates in all personnel management actions.

e. The "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services" recommends that a graduate of the NRSMC receive college level credit. The academic standards and evaluations performed by the student determine the amount of credit given by the accrediting college or university.

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\* This circular supersedes USASMA Circular 350-01-1, dated 13 February 2001.

<p>The proponent for this circular is the Nonresident Sergeants Major Course. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to Commandant, USASMA, ATTN: ATSS-BAC, Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002.</p>
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CHARLES R. DEWITT  
COL, AD  
Commandant

DISTRIBUTION:

Special, Class 29, 1 ea. student

ANNEX A (SAMPLE MEMORANDUM FOR REFERRED AERs) to USASMA CIR 350-02-1

ATSS-C

(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR MSG John Doe, 012-34-5678, Student, Class #\_\_\_\_, USA NRSMC,  
USA Sergeants Major Academy, Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal

The enclosed Academic Evaluation Report (DA Form 1059) is referred to you for your acknowledgement and information. You have the option of submitting a statement in your behalf in accordance with AR 623-1, paragraph 1-13c. Comments or statements do not constitute an appeal. Appeals are filed and processed separately as outlined in AR 623-205.

EIYE M. JEFE  
COL, CM  
Commandant

ATSS-STU 1st End  
978-8619

B.Bradford/blb/DSN

MSG John Doe, USA NRSMC, USA Sergeants Major Academy,  
Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002 DATE:\_\_\_\_\_

FOR Commandant, USA Sergeants Major Academy, Ft Bliss, TX 79918-8002

I acknowledge receipt of the Academic Evaluation Report and:

- a. elect not to make a statement.\_\_\_\_\_  
(initials)
- b. submit the attached statement in my behalf.\_\_\_\_\_  
(initials)

JOHN DOE  
MSG, USA